trīdĕnt, only there were five instead of three. This he pushed straight down among the mud in the deepest part of the river, and fetched up eels sticking between the prongs.

*Tutor.* I have seen this method. It is called spearing of eels.

*William.* While I was looking at him, a hĕron came flying over my head with his large flagging wings. He alighted at the next turn of the river, and I crept sŏftly behind the bank to watch his motions. He had waded into the water as far as his lŏng legs would carry him, and was standing with his neck drawn in, looking intently on the stream. Presently he dashed his long bill as quick as lightning into the water, and drew out a fish, which he swallōwed. I saw him cătch another in the same manner. He then took alarm at some noise I made, and flew away slowly to a wood at some distance, where he settled.

*Tutor.* Probably his nest was there; for hĕrons build upon the lŏftiest trees they can find, and sometimes in society togĕther, like rooks. Formerly, when these birds were valued for the amusement of hawking,[1] many gentlemen had their hĕronries; and a few are still remaining.

*William.* I then turned homeward acrŏss the meadōws, where I stopped a while to look at a large flock of starlings, which kept flying about at no great distance. I could not tell at first what to make of them; for they rose all togĕther from the ground as thick as a swarm of bees, and formed themselves into a kind of black cloud, hovering over the field: after taking a short round, they settled again, and presently rose again in the same manner. I dare say there were hundreds of them.

*Tutor.* Perhaps so, for in the fenny[2] countries their flocks are so numerous as to break down whōle acres of

[1] Hâwk' ing, the taking of wild fowls by means of hawks.—[2] Fĕn' ny, marshy; boggy; growing in fens.



reeds, by settling on them. This disposition of starlings to fly in close swarms was remarked even by Homer,[1] who compares the foe flying from one of his heroes to a cloud of starlings retiring dismayed at the approach of the hawk.

*William.* After I had left the meadōws, I crŏssed the corn-fields in the way to our house, and passed close by a deep marl-pit.[2] Looking into it, I saw in one of the sides a cluster of what I took to be shells; and upon going down, I picked up a clod of marl, which was quite full of them; but how sea-shells could gĕt there, I can not imagine.

*Tutor.* I do not wonder at your surprise, since many philosophers have been much perplexed to account for the same appearance. It is not uncommon to find great quantities of shells and relics[3] of marine[4] animals even in the bowels of high mountains vĕry remote from the sea.

*William.* I got to the high field next to our house just as the sun was setting, and I stood looking at it till it was quite lŏst. What a glōrious sight! The clouds were tinged with purple, and crimson, and yĕllōw, of all shades and hues, and the clear sky varied from blue to a fine green at the horī'zon.[5] But how large the sun appears just as it sets! I think it seems twice as big as when it is overhead.

*Tutor.* It does so; and you may probably have observed the same apparent[6] enlargement of the moon at its rising.

*William.* I have; but pray what is the reason of this?

[1] Homer, the most distinguished of poets, entitled "The Father of Song." He is supposed to have been an Asiatic Greek, though his birthplace, and the period in which he lived, are unknown.—[2] Mârl' pit, a pit where marl, a kind of earth used to enrich land, is dug.—[3] Relics (rĕl'iks), things that remain, or are left after the decay or loss of a part.—[4] Marine (ma rēn'), pertaining to the sea. Marine animals are those that live in the sea.—[5] Ho rī' zon, the line that bounds the sight where the earth and sky appear to meet.—[6] Ap pâr' ent, perceivable to the eye; that may be seen; seeming.

*Tutor.* It is an optical deception, depending upon principles which I can not well explain to you till you know more of that branch of science. But what a number of new ideäs this afternoon's walk has afforded you! I do not wonder that you found it amusing; it has been vĕry instructing, too. Did you see nothing of all these sights, Robert?

*Robert.* I saw some of them, but I did not take particular notice of them.

*Tutor.* Why not?

*Robert.* I do not know. I did not care about them; and I made the best of my way home.

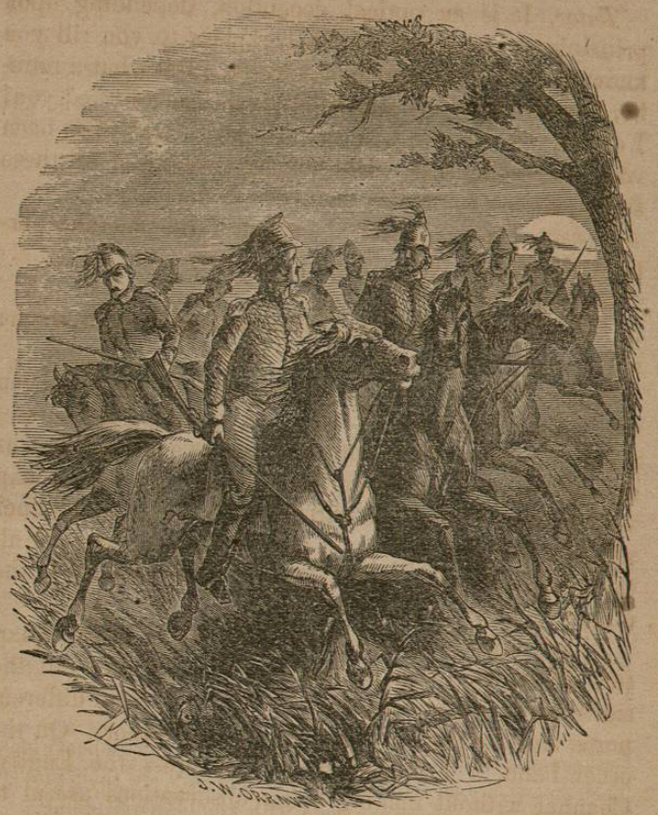
*Tutor.* That would have been right if you had been sent on a message; but as you only walked for amusement, it would have been wiser to have sought out as many sŏurces of it as possible. But so it is,—one man walks through the world with his eyes open, and another with them shut; and upon this difference depends all the superiŏrity of knowledge the one acquires above the other.

I have known a sailor who had been in all the quarters of the world, and could tell you nothing but the signs of the tippling-houses he frequent'ed in different ports, and the price and quality of the liquor. On the other hand, a Franklin[1] could not crŏss the English Channel without making some observations useful to mankind.

While many a vacant, thoughtless youth, is whirled throughout Europe, without gaining a single ideä worth crŏssing a street for, the observing eye and inquiring mind find matter for improvement and delight in every ramble in town or country. Do you, then, William, continue to make use of your eyes, and you, Robert, learn that eyes were given you to use. AIKEN.

[1] Benjamin Franklin, an eminent American moralist, statesman, and philosopher, was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on the 6th of January, 1706, and died in Philadelphia, April 17th, 1790.





## 129. Song of Marion's Men.

I.

OUR band is few, but true and tried, our leader frank and bold:
The British soldier trembles when Marion's[1] name is told;
Our fortress is the good green wood, our tent the cypress-tree;
We know the fŏrest round us, as seamen know the sea.
We know its walls of thorny vines, its glădes of reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands within the dark morăss.

[1] Francis Marion, a distinguished officer of the American revolution, was born in South Carolina, the scene of his principal exploits. He died in 1795.

II.

Woe to the Ĕnglish soldiery that little dread us near!
On them shall light at midnight a strānge and sudden fear:
When, waking to their tents on fire, they grasp their arms in vain,
And they who stand to face us are beat to earth again;
And they who fly in tĕrror deem a mighty hōst behind,
And hear the tramp of thousands upon the hollōw wīnd.

III.

Then sweet the hour that brings release from dānger and from toil!
We talk the battle over, and share the battle's spoil.
The woodland rings with laugh and shout, as if a hunt were up,
And woodland flowers are gāthered to crown the soldier's cup.
With mĕrry sōngs we mŏck the wind that in the pine-top grieves,
And slumber lŏng and sweetly, on beds of oaken leaves.

IV.

Well knows the fair and friendly moon the band that MARION leads—
The glitter of their rifles, the scampering of their steeds.
'Tis life to guide the fiery barb acrŏss the moonlight plain;
'Tis life to feel the night-wind that lifts his tŏssing mane.
A moment in the British camp—a moment—and away
Back to the pathless fŏrest, before the peep of day.

V.

Grave men there are by broad Santee,[1] grave men with hoary hairs,
Their hearts are all with MARION, for MARION are their prayers.
And lovely ladies greet our band with kindliest welcoming,
With smiles like those of summer, and tears like those of spring.
For them we wear these trusty arms, and lay them down no mōre,
Till we have driven the Briton forever from our shōre.

## 130. AN EASTERN FABLE.

ABDALLAH sat at his morning meal, when there alighted on the rim of his goblet a little fly. It sipped an atom of sĭrup, and was gŏne. But it came

[1] San tēe', a river of South Carolina about 150 miles in length.



next morning, and the next, and the next again, till at last the scholar noticed it. Not quite a common fly, it seemed to know that it was beautiful, and it soon grew vĕry bold.

2. And lo! a great wonder: it became daily larger and yĕt larger, till there could be discerned,[1] in the size, as of a locust, the appearance of a man. From a hand-breadth, it reached the stature[2] of a cubit;[3] and still so winning were its ways, that it found more and more favor with this son of infatuation.[4] It frisked like a sātyr,[5] and it sang like a pĕrĭ,[6] and like a mŏth of the evening it danced on the ceiling, and, like the king's gift, whithersoever it turned, it prospered.

3. The eyes of the simple one were blinded, so that he could not, in all this, perceive the subtlety[7] of an evil gēniüs.[8] Therefore the lying spirit waxed bolder and yĕt bolder, and whatsoever his soul desired of dainty meats, he freely took; and when the scholar waxed wroth, and said, "This is my daily pōrtion from the table of the mufti[9]—there is not enough for thee and me," the dŏg-faced deceiver played some pleasant trick, and caused the silly one to smile; until, in prŏcess of time, the scholar perceived that, as his guest grew strŏnger and stronger, he himself waxed weaker and weaker.

4. Now, also, there arose frequent strife betwixt the dēmon and his dupe, and at last the youth smote the fiend so sore that he departed for a season. And when he was gŏne, Abdallah rejoiced, and said, "I have tri-

Dis cĕrned', discovered; seen.—[2] Stature (stăt' yer), tallness; height.—[3] Cŭ' bit, the measure of a man's arm from the elbow.—[4] In fat u ā'-tion, extreme or very great folly.—[5] Sā' tyr, a fabulous deity or monster of the wood, half man and half goat.—[6] Pē' rĭ, in the East, a spirit supposed to be shut out of heaven, for some fault, till it is made pure by pain or suffering.—[7] Subtlety, (sŭt' tl tĭ), slyness; artfulness; cunning.—[8] Genius (jē' ne us), a good or evil spirit or demon, who was supposed, in ancient times, to direct and rule a man through life.—[9] Mŭf' ti, a Mohammedan high-priest; a Turkish name of a doctor of the law of the Koran, or Mohammedan bible.

umphed over mine enemy, and whatsoever time it pleaseth me, I shall smite him so that he die. Is he not altogĕther in mine own power?"

5. But after not many days, the tempter came back again; and this time he was arrayed in goodly garments, and he brought a present in his hand, and he spake of the days of their first friendship, and he looked so mild and feeble, that his smooth words wrought upon this dove without a heart, and saying, "Is he not a little one?" he received him again into his chămber.

6. On the mŏrrōw, when Abdallah came not into the assembly of studious youth, the mufti said, "Wherefore[1] tarriëst the son of Abdul? Perchance he sleepeth." Therefore[2] they repaired even to his chămber; but to their knocking he made no answer. Wherefore the mufti opened the door, and, lo! there lay on the divan[3] the dead body of his disciple.

7. His visage was black and swollen, and on his throat was the pressure of a finger broader than the palm of a mighty man. All the stuff, the gold, and the chānges of raiment belŏnging to the hapless one were gŏne, and in the sŏft earth of the garden were seen the footsteps of a giant. The mufti mĕasured one of the prints, and, behold! it was six cubits lŏng.

8. Reader, canst thou expound the riddle? Is it the bottle or the betting-book? Is it the billiard-table or the theater? Is it smoking? Is it laziness? Is it novel-reading? But know that an evil habit is an elf constantly expanding. It may come in at the keyhole, but it will soon grow too big for the house. Know, also, that no evil habit can take the life of your soul, unless you yourself noŭrish it and cherish it, and, by feeding it with your own vitality,[4] give it a strength greater than your own.

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[1] Wherefore (whâr' fôr), for which reason; why.—[2] Thĕre' fôre, for this reason.—[3] Dĭ vān', a kind of sofa.—[4] Vi tăl' i ty, life; the power or means of maintaining life.



## 131. The Heritage.

1. THE rich man's son inhĕrits[1] lands,
And piles of brick, and stone, and gold;
And he inherits sŏft, white hands,
And tender flesh that fears the cold,
Nor dares to wear a garment old;
A hĕritage,[2] it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.[3]

2. The rich man's son inhĕrits cares:
The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst his bubble shares,
And sŏft white hands could hardly earn
A living that would serve his turn;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

3. The rich man's son inhĕrits wants,
His stomach craves for dainty fare;
With sāted[4] heart he hears the pants
Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,
And wearies in his easy-chair;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

4. What doth the poor man's son inhĕrit?
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,
A hardy frame, a hardier spirit;
King of two hands, he does his part
In every useful toil and art;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

[1] In hĕr' it, to take what is left by parents or ancestors.—[2] Hĕr' it age, that which descends to us from our ancestors.—[3] Fēe, a *fee*, or *fee simple*, is property, especially land, held by a person in his own right, and which may descend to his children or other heirs forever.—[4] Sāt' ed, fed or gratified to the extent of desire.

5. What doth the poor man's son inhĕrit?
Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,
A rank adjudged with toil-won mĕrit,
Content that from employment springs,
A heart that in his labor sings;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

6. What doth the poor man's son inhĕrit?
A patience learned by being poor,
Coŭrage, if sŏrrōw come, to bear it,
A fellōw-feeling that is sure
To make the outcast bless his door;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

7. O rich man's son! there is a toil,
That with all other level stands:
Large charity doth never soil,
But only whiten, sŏft, white hands,—
This is the best crop from thy lands;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
Worth being rich to hold in fee.

8. O poor man's son! scorn not thy state;
There is worse weariness than thine—
In merely being rich and great:
Toil only gives the soul to shine,
And makes rest frāgrant and benign,
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
Worth being poor to hold in fee.

9. Bōth, heirs to some six feet of sod,
Are equal in the earth at last:
Both, children of the same dear Gŏd,
Prove title to your heirship vast
By record of a well-filled past;
A hĕritage, it seems to me,
Well worth a life to hold in fee.

J. R. Lowell.



## 132. Youth and Sorrow.

1. "GĔT thee back, Sŏrrōw, gĕt thee back!
My brow is smooth, mine eyes are bright,
My limbs are full of health and strength,
My cheeks are fresh, my heart is light.
So, get thee back! oh, get thee back!
Consort'[1] with age, but not with me;
Why shouldst thou follōw on my track?
I am too young to live with thee."

2. "O foolish Youth, to scorn thy friend!
To harm thee wherefore should I seek?
I would not dim thy sparkling eyes,
Nor blight the roses on thy cheek.
I would but teach thee to be true;
And should I press thee overmuch,
Ever the flowers that I bedew[2]
Yield sweetest frāgrance[3] to the touch."

3. "Gĕt thee back, Sŏrrōw, get thee back!
I like thee not; thy looks are chill;
The sunshine lies upon my heart,
Thou showèst me the shadōw still.
So, get thee back! oh, get thee back!
Nor touch my golden locks with gray,
Why shouldst thou follōw on my track?
Let me be happy while I may."

4. "Good friend, thou needèst sage advice;
I'll keep thy heart from growing proud,
I'll fill thy mind with kindly thoughts,
And link thy pity to the crowd.
Wouldst have a heart of pulseless stone?
Wouldst be too happy to be good?
Nor make a human woe thine own?
For sake of human brotherhood?"

[1] Con sort', join; unite in company.—[2] Bedew (be dū'), moisten gently; wet with dew.—[3] Frā' grance, sweetness of smell; pleasing scent.

5. "Gĕt thee back, Sŏrrōw, get thee back!
Why should I weep while I am young?
I have not piped—I have not danced—
My morning sŏngs I have not sung:
The world is beautiful to me,
Why tarnish it to soul and sense?
Prĭthee,[1] begŏne! I'll think of thee
Some half a hundred winters hence."

6. "O foolish Youth, thou know'st me not:
I am the mistress of the earth:
'Tis *I* give tenderness to love;
Enhance[2] the privilege of mirth;
Refine the human gold from drŏss;
And teach thee, wormling of the sod,
To look beyŏnd thy present lŏss
To thy eternal[3] gain with Gŏd."

7. "Gĕt thee back, Sŏrrōw, get thee back!
I'll learn thy lessons soon enough;
If virtuous plĕasures smooth my way,
Why shouldst thou seek to make it rough?
No fruit can ripen in the dark,
No bud can bloom in constant cold—
So, prithee, Sorrow, miss thy mark,
Or strike me not till I am old."

8. "I am thy friend, thy best of friends;
No bud in constant heats can blow—
The green fruit withers in the drought,[4]
But ripens where the waters flow.
The sŏrrōws of thy youthful day
Shall make thee wise in coming years;
The brightest rainbows ever play
Above the fountains of our tears."

[1] Prith'ee, I pray thee.—[2] En hånce', raise to a higher point; advance; increase.—[3] E tĕr'nal, having no beginning or end; ceaseless.—[4] Drought (drout), dryness; want of rain; a long continuance of dry weather.



9. "Youth frowned, but Sŏrrōw gently smiled;
Upon his heart her hand she laid,
And all its hidden sympathies
Throbbed to the fingers of the maid:
And when his head grew gray with Time,
He owned that Sorrow spoke the truth,
And that the harvest of his prime
Was ripened by the rains of Youth."

CHARLES MACKAY.

## 133. THE LITTLE MAN IN BLACK.

SOON after my grandfather, Mr. Lemuel Cocklŏft, had quietly settled himself at the hall, and just about the time that the gossips of the neighborhood, tired of prying into his affairs, were anxious for some new tea-table topic, the busy community of our little village was thrown into a grand turmoil of curiosity and conjecture—a situation vĕry common to little gossiping villages—by the sudden and unaccountable appearance of a mysterious individual.

2. The object of this solicitude[1] was a little black-looking man, of a fŏreign aspect, who took possession of an old building, which, having lŏng had the reputation of being haunted, was in a state of ruinous desolation, and an object of fear to all true believers in ghosts. He usually wore a high sugar-loaf hat with a nărrōw brim; and a little black cloak, which, short as he was, scarcely reached below his knees.

3. He sought no intimacy or acquaintance with anyone; appeared to take no interest in the plĕasures or the little broils of the village; nor ever talked, except sometimes to himself in an outlandish tongue. He commonly carried a large book, covered with sheepskin, under his arm; appeared always to be lŏst in meditation; and was ŏften met by the peasantry, sometimes

[1] So lic'i tūde, trouble; care; anxiety.

watching the dawning of day; sometimes, at noon, seated under a tree poring over his volume; and sometimes, at evening, gazing with a look of sober tranquillity[1] at the sun as it gradually sunk below the horī′zon.

4. The good people of the vicinity beheld something prodigiously[2] singular in all this;—a profound[3] mystery[4] seemed to hang about the strānger, which, with all their sagăcity,[5] they could not penetrate;[6] and, in the excess of worldly charity, they pronounced it a sure sign "that he was no better than he should be,"—a phrase innocent enough in itself, but which, as applied in common, signifies nearly every thing that is bad.

5. The young people thought him a gloomy misanthrope,[7] because he never joined in their spōrts; the old men thought still more hardly of him because he followed no trade, nor ever seemed ambitious of earning a farthing; and as to the old gossips, baffled by the inflexible[8] taciturnity[9] of the strānger, they unanimously decreed that a man who could not or would not talk was no better than a dumb beast. The little man in black, careless of their opinions, seemed resolved to maintain the liberty of keeping his own secret; and the consequence was, that, in a little while, the whōle village was in an uproar;—for, in little communities of this description, the members have always the privilege of being thoroughly versed, and even of meddling in all the affairs of each other.

6. A confidential conference was held one Sunday morning after sermon, at the door of the village church,

[1] Tranquillity (trăn kwĭl′ e tĭ), peace; quiet; freedom from care or trouble.—[2] Prodigiously (pro dĭd′ jus lĭ), extremely; amazingly; astonishingly.—[3] Pro found′, deep; very great.—[4] Mystery (mĭs′ te rĭ), something not to be discovered; a great secret.—[5] Sa găc′ i ty, the power of perceiving or seeing quickly and clearly, and of turning every thing to the best advantage.—[6] Pĕn′ e trate, see through or understand.—[7] Mis-ăn′ thrope, a hater of mankind.—[8] In flĕx′ i ble, stubborn; that can not be turned or changed.—[9] Taciturnity (tăs i tĕrn′ i tĭ), habitual or intentional silence; reserve.



and the character of the unknown fully investigated. The schoolmaster gave as his opinion, that he was the wandering Jew; the sexton was certain that he must be a Freemason, from his silence; a third maintained, with great obstinacy, that he was a high German doctor, and that the book which he carried about with him contained the secrets of the black-art; but the most prevailing opinion seemed to be that he was a witch,—a race of beings at that time abounding in those parts; and a sagācious old mātron from Connecticut proposed to ascertain the fact by sousing him into a kĕttle of hot water.

7. Suspicion,[1] when once afloat, goes with wind and tide, and soon becomes certainty. Many a stormy night was the little man in black seen, by the flashes of lightning, frisking and curveting[2] in the air upon a broomstick; and it was always observed, that at those times the storm did more mischief than at any other. The old lady in particular, who suggested the humane ordeăl[3] of the boiling kĕttle, lŏst on one of these occasions a fine brinded[4] cow, which accident was entirely ascribed to the vengeance of the little man in black.

8. If ever a mischievous hireling rode his master's favorite horse to a distant frolic, and the animal was observed to be lame and jaded in the morning, the little man in black was sure to be at the bottom of the affair; nor could a high wind howl through the village at night, but the old women shrugged up their shoulders, and observed, "the little man in black was in his *tantrums*." In short, he became the bugbear of every house, and was as effectual in frightening little children into obedience and hysterics as the redoubtable Raw-head-and-bloody-bones himself; nor could a housewife of the vil-

[1] Suspicion (sus pĭsh′ un), act of imagining or mi trusting something on slight proof; distrust; want of confidence.—[2] Curveting (kĕr′ veting), leaping; bounding; frolicking.—[3] Or′ de al, trial of guilt by fire or water; a severe trial.—[4] Brĭnd′ ed, streaked; spotted.

lage sleep in peace, except under the guardiänship of a horse-shoe nailed to the door.

9. The object of these direful suspicions remained for some time totally ignorant of the wonderful quandary[1] he had occasioned; but he was soon doomed to feel its effects. An individual who is once so unfortunate as to incur the odiüm of a village, is in a great mĕasure outlawed and proscribed,[2] and becomes a mark for injury and insult, particularly if he has not the power or the disposition to recriminate.[3]

10. The little venomous[4] passions, which in the great world are dissipated[5] and weakened by being widely diffused,[6] act in the nărrōw limits of a country town with collected vigor, and become rancorous[7] in proportion as they are confined in their sphere of action. The little man in black experienced the truth of this. Every mischievous urchin returning from school had full liberty to break his windōws, and this was considered as a most daring exploit; for in such awe did they stand of him, that the most adventurous schoolboy was never seen to approach his threshold, and at night would prefer going round by the crŏss-roads, where a traveler had been murdered by the Indians, rather than pass by the door of his forlorn habitation.

11. The only living creature that seemed to have any care or affection for this deserted being, was an old turnspit,—the companion of his lonely mansion and his solitary wandering—the sharer of his scanty meals—and, sŏrry I am to say it, the sharer of his persecutions. The turnspit, like his master, was peaceable and inoffensive;

[1] Quandary (kwŏn′ da rĭ), a state of difficulty; uncertainty.—[2] Proscribed (pro skrībd′), put out of the protection of the law; condemned as dangerous or unworthy.—[3] Re crĭm′ i nāte, to return one charge of crime with another; to charge an accuser with the same crime or fault.—[4] Vĕn′ om ous, poisonous; spiteful; mischievous.—[5] Dis′ si pāt ed, driven asunder; scattered.—[6] Diffused (dif fūz′d′), poured out; spread in all directions.—[7] Rancorous (răng′ ker ŭs), very bitter; spiteful in the greatest degree.



never known to bark at a horse, to growl at a traveler, or to quarrel with the dogs of the neighborhood. He followed close at his master's heels when he went out, and when he returned stretched himself in the sunbeams at the door, demeaning[1] himself in all things like a civil and well-disposed turnspit.

12. But notwithstanding his exemplary[2] depōrtment,[3] he fell likewise under the ill repōrt of the village, as being the familiar of the little man in black, and the evil spirit that presided at his incantations.[4] The old hovel was considered as the scene of their unhăllowed rites, and its harmless tenants regarded with a dĕtestā′tion[5] which their inoffensive conduct never merited. Though pelted and jeered at by the brats of the village, and frequently abused by their parents, the little man in black never turned to rebuke them; and his faithful dŏg, when wantonly assaulted, looked up wistfully in his master's face, and there learned a lesson of patience and forbearance.

13. The movements of this inscrutable[6] being had lŏng been the subject of speculation[7] at Cocklŏft-hall, for its inmates were full as much given to wondering as their descendants. The patience with which he bore his persecutions particularly surprised them, for patience is a virtue but little known in the Cockloft family. My grandmother, who it appears was rather superstitious, saw in this humility nothing but the gloomy sullenness of a wizard,[8] who restrained himself for the present, in

[1] De mēan′ ing, behaving or conducting.—[2] Exemplary (egz ĕm′ plā rĭ), serving for a pattern; worthy of imitation.—[3] De pōrt′ ment, manner of acting toward others; behavior.—[4] Incantations (in kan tā′ shunz), magic charms; supposed influences that can not be resisted or overcome.—[5] Dĕt es tā′ tion, extreme or very great hatred.—[6] Inscrutable (in skrō′ ta bl), unsearchable; not to be discovered or understood by human reason.—[7] Spec u lā′ tion, views of a subject or thing not proved to be true by fact or experience.—[8] Wĭz′ ard, an enchanter; one supposed to be able to perform remarkable acts by the aid of spirits or unseen powers.

hopes of midnight vengeance;—the parson of the village, who was a man of some reading, pronounced it the stubborn insensibility[1] of a stoic[2] philosopher;—my grandfather, who, worthy soul, seldom wandered abroad in search of conclusions, took a dāta[3] from his own excellent heart, and regarded it as the humble forgiveness of a Christian. But however different were their opinions as to the character of the strānger, they agreed in one particular, namely, in never intruding upon his solitude; and my grandmother, who was at that time nursing my mother, never left the room without wisely putting the large family Bible in the cradle,—a sure talisman,[4] in her opinion, against witchcraft and necromancy.[5]

## 134. The Little Man in Black—concluded.

ONE stormy winter night, when a bleak northeast wind moaned about the cottages, and howled around the village steeple, my grandfather was returning from club, preceded by a servant with a lantern. Just as he arrived opposite the desolate abode of the little man in black, he was arrested by the piteous howling of a dŏg, which, heard in the pauses of a storm, was exquisitely[6] mournful; and he fancied now and then that he caught the low and broken groans of some one in distress.

2. He stopped for some minutes, hesitating between the benevolence of his heart and a sensation of genuine delicacy, which, in spite of his eccentricity,[7] he fully

[1] In sen si bĭl' i ty, want of feeling.—[2] Stō' ic, unmoved; unfeeling; cold.—[3] Dā' ta, things or truths used to find results.—[4] Talisman (tăl'-iz man), something to which wonderful effects were ascribed, such as preservation from sickness, injury, &c.—[5] Nĕc' ro man cy, the art of making known what is to happen, by means of a pretended communication with the dead; enchantment.—[6] Exquisitely (ĕks' kwe zit ll), completely; very keenly felt.—[7] Ec cen trĭc' i ty, the quality of being peculiar, odd, or strange; singularity.



possessed, and which forbăde him to pry into the concerns of his neighbors. Perhaps, too, this hesitation might have been strengthened by a little taint of superstition;[1] for surely, if the unknown had been addicted to witchcraft, this was a most propitious[2] night for his vagaries.[3] At length the old gentleman's philanthropy[4] predominated;[5] he approached the hovel, and pushing open the door,—for poverty has no occasion for locks and keys,—beheld, by the light of the lantern, a scene that smote his generous heart to the core.

3. On a miserable bed, with pallid and emaciated visage and hollōw eyes, in a room destitute of every convenience, without fire to warm or friend to console him, lay this helpless mortal, who had been so lŏng the terror and wonder of the village. His dog was crouching on the scanty coverlet, and shivering with cold. My grandfather stepped sŏftly and hesitatingly to the bedside, and accŏsted the forlŏrn sufferer in his usual accents of kindness. The little man in black seemed recalled by the tones of compassion from the lethargy[6] into which he had fallen; for, though his heart was almost frozen, there was yĕt one chord that answered to the call of the good old man who bent over him: the tones of sympathy, so novel to his ear, called back his wandering senses, and acted like a restorative to his solitary feelings.

4. He raised his eyes, but they were vacant and haggard. He put fōrth his hand, but it was cold. He essayed to speak, but the sound died away in his throat. He pointed to his mouth with an expression of dreadful

[1] Su per stĭ' tion, an unfounded or groundless belief in the existence of particular facts or events, produced by a power beyond what is human.—[2] Propitious (pro pĭsh' us), highly favorable to success.—[3] Vagaries (vā' ga rez), wild freaks; whimsical purposes.—[4] Phi lăn' thro py, love of mankind.—[5] Pre dŏm' i nāt ed, prevailed; gained a controling influence.—[6] Lĕth' ar gy, unhealthy drowsiness; dullness.

meaning, and, sad to relate! my grandfather understood that the harmless stränger, deserted by society, was pĕrishing with hunger! With the quick impulse of humanity he dispatched the servant to the hall for refreshment. A little warm noŭrishment renovated him for a short time, but not lŏng. It was evident his pilgrimage was drawing to a close, and he was about entering that peaceful asylum[1] where "the wicked cease from troubling."

5. His tale of misery was short and quickly told. Infirmities had stolen upon him, heightened by the rigors of the season: he had taken to his bed without strength to rise and ask for assistance;—"and if I had," said he, in a tone of bitter despondency,[2] "tŏ whom should I have applied? I have no friend that I know of in the world; the villagers avoid me as something loathsome and dängerous; and here, in the midst of Christians, should I have pĕrished, without a fellōw-being to soothe the last moments of existence, and close my dying eyes, had not the howlings of my faithful dŏg excited your attention."

6. He seemed deeply sensible of the kindness of my grandfather; and at one time, as he looked up into his old benefactor's face, a solitary tear was observed to steal adown the parched fŭrrōws of his cheek. Poor outcast!—it was the last tear he shed; but I warrant it was not the first by millions! My grandfather watched by him all night. Toward morning he gradually declined, and as the rising sun gleamed through the windōw, he begged to be raised in his bed that he might look at it for the last time. He contem'plated it for a moment with a kind of religious enthusiasm,[3] and his lips moved as if engaged in prayer.

[1] A sy'lum, an institution or place for the benefit of the destitute or unfortunate: here means the grave.—[2] De spŏnd' en cy, despair; hopelessness.—[3] Enthusiasm (en thū' ze azm), a warm zeal in respect to some object or pursuit.



7. The strānge conjectures concerning him rushed on my grandfather's mind: "He is an idolater!" thought he, "and is worshiping the sun!" He listened a moment, and blushed at his own uncharitable suspicion: he was only engaged in the pious devotions of a Christian. His simple ŏr'ison[1] being finished, the little man in black withdrew his eyes from the east, and taking my grandfather's hand in one of his, and making a motion with the other toward the sun—"I love to contem'plate it," said he: "'tis an emblem[2] of the universal benevolence of a true Christian; and it is the most glōrious work of Him who is philanthropy itself!"

8. My grandfather blushed still deeper at his ungenerous surmises: he had pitied the strānger at first, but now he revered him. He turned once more to regard him, but his countenance had undergone a chānge: the holy enthusiasm that had lighted up each feature, had given place to an expression of mysterious impōrt: a gleam of grandeur seemed to steal acrŏss his Gothic[3] visage, and he appeared full of some mighty secret which he hesitated to impart. He raised the tattered nightcap that had sunk almost over his eyes, and waving his withered hand with a slow and feeble expression of dignity—"In me," said he, with laconic[4] solemnity—"in me you behold the last descendant of the renowned Linkum Fidelius!"

9. My grandfather gazed at him with reverence; for though he had never heard of the illustrious personage thus pŏmpously announced, yĕt there was a certain black-letter dignity in the name that peculiarly struck his fancy and commanded his respect. "You have been kind to me," continued the little man in black, after a

[1] Orison (ŏr' e zon), supplication; a prayer.—[2] Em' blem, a type or figure; a picture imaging forth a truth or lesson by some figure or scene.—[3] Gŏth' ic, pertaining to the Goths, a people that once inhabited Sweden and Norway; rude; dark.—[4] La cŏn' ic, expressing much in few words; short.